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Letters

Mondale's effect on the CIA

Former President Carter and members of Congress who are reacting violently against President Reagan's critical comments on our intelligence-gathering capabilities should review the Church Committee's final report and its aftermath.

Former Sen. Frank Church of Idaho headed the Senate Select Committee set up to study U.S. intelligence activities in 1975-1976. Walter Mondale and Gary Hart were majority members of the committee.

Sens. John Tower, Howard Baker, and Barry Goldwater, three of the five Republican members, in submitting addenda to the final report, expressed "our mutual concern that remedial measures proposed by this committee threaten to impose undue restrictions upon vital and legitimate intelligence functions." History has shown this concern was well-founded.

Mr. Tower felt the report "comes dangerously close to being a blueprint for authorizing congressional management of the day-to-day affairs of the intelligence community."

The stringent oversight exercised by Congress over our intelligence community since then proves the report was, in fact, such a blueprint. This is not to suggest objective congressional oversight is wrong, but merely that Congress itself has earned a major share of



responsibility for intelligence failures.

Intelligence activities cannot be conducted in a goldfish bowl. Among other drawbacks is the fact that sources and informants capable of reporting on proposed actions of terrorist cells will not risk their health or lives by cooperating if there is even a remote chance their cooperation will become known.

Mr. Mondale was a prominent member of the Church Committee. (He chaired it during some of my testimony.) Subsequently, as vice president, he became Mr. Carter's expert on intelligence. The angry reaction we have witnessed may be a move to protect "what's-his-name's" flanks.

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